



The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum Becomes the First Museum in Oklahoma to Earn Certified Autism Center Designation

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum (NCWHM) is now the first museum in Oklahoma to earn the Certified Autism Center™ (CAC) designation, which is granted by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES). The CAC is awarded to organizations that complete training and certification to better understand and assist autistic or sensory-sensitive individuals and their families during their museum visit. As part of certification, IBCCES also conducted an onsite review to provide additional recommendations on how the Museum can accommodate visitors and created sensory guides for each exhibit to help visitors understand the detailed sensory impact of each area.

“We want to provide a welcoming space for all of our guests, including those who are autistic or have sensory needs,” said President & CEO Natalie Shirley. “I’m proud of our staff and the work that went into securing this important designation for our museum.”

In addition, the Museum now offers sensory kits for visitors created by the Autism Foundation of Oklahoma. These kits include tools to help ease anxiety and enhance communication for autistic individuals in high-stress situations, and include items such as noise-cancelling headphones, communication cards, activity books, sunglasses, and fidget/sensory toys. The Museum also offers accessibility options such as wheelchairs and scooters access, American Sign Language interpreters upon advanced request, closed captioning in Museum theaters, and a quiet space for any guest feeling overly stimulated.

“IBCCES is excited to see more organizations focusing on accessibility we’re thrilled the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum has joined this movement by completing certification. There are millions of autistic individuals and their families who are actively seeking out organizations that are taking these steps to be more inclusive and accessible,” said Myron Pincomb, IBCCES board chairman.

For more than 20 years, IBCCES has been the leader in cognitive disorder training and certification for healthcare, education, and corporate professionals around the globe. IBCCES created programs specifically for hospitality and recreational organizations such as hotels, theme parks, museums, and other attractions so staff would be more knowledgeable and other accommodations could be offered to this growing, but underserved, part of the community. IBCCES is the only credentialing board offering these types of programs, which include training from subject matter experts and autistic self-advocates, as well as long-term support and continuous learning, onsite reviews, and more.

IBCCES also created AutismTravel.com, as a free online resource for parents that lists certified locations and professionals. Each organization listed on the site has met Certified Autism Center™ (CAC) requirements.

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About National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City is America's premier institution of Western history, art and culture. Founded in 1955, the Museum collects, preserves and exhibits an internationally renowned collection of Western art and artifacts while sponsoring dynamic educational programs to stimulate interest in the enduring legacy of the American West. The Museum is located only six miles northeast of downtown Oklahoma City at 1700 Northeast 63rd Street. For more information, visit nationalcowboymuseum.org.

About IBCCES

Committed to providing The Global Standard For Training and Certification in The Field of Cognitive Disorders – IBCCES provides a series of certifications that empower professionals to be leaders in their field and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. These programs are recognized around the world as the leading benchmark for training and certification in the areas of autism and other cognitive disorders.

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